

Vernon Walters Said Choice for U.N. Post

By Lou Cannon and David Hoffman
Washington Post Staff Writers

President Reagan has decided to name retired lieutenant general Vernon A. Walters to replace Jeane J. Kirkpatrick as ambassador to the United Nations, well-placed administration officials said yesterday.

Walters, the chief diplomatic troubleshooter at the State Department, has the support of Secretary of State George P. Shultz and also is considered acceptable to more conservative elements in the administration.

An accomplished linguist reputed to be fluent in eight languages, Walters served as an aide to President Dwight D. Eisenhower at various summit meetings and was with then-Vice President Richard M. Nixon when his party was stoned by demonstrators in Caracas in 1958.

Nixon appointed Walters deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency in 1972.

In this post Walters was approached by Nixon chief of staff H.R. Haldeman and asked to block an investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation into the Watergate burglary by saying that it would compromise CIA interests in Mexico.

Walters did as he was told but then checked on what Haldeman had said and told White House counsel John Dean that no such interests would be compromised.

"It simply did not occur to me that the chief of staff to the president might be asking me to do something that was illegal or wrong," Walters wrote in his memoirs.

Administration officials who said that Walters would be named by the president said the issue of whether the U.N. post would remain of Cabinet rank still was unresolved.

Reportedly, Kirkpatrick had urged Walters not to accept the job unless it was a Cabinet position, while Shultz does not want it to be a Cabinet post.

The sources said the status of the job would "be worked out soon" by the president but indicated that Walters would accept the post in any case.

Walters retired from the CIA in 1976 and since 1981 has been used widely as a consultant and ambassador-at-large by the State Department.

He served on an advisory committee to Reagan during the 1984 campaign.

Meanwhile, sources also said that Max L. Friedersdorf, a veteran of the Nixon, Ford and Reagan administrations, is discussing the possibility of returning to the White House at the outset of Reagan's second term as chief of liaison with Congress.

Friedersdorf, who held a similar post in 1981, has talked about coming back to the White House with incoming chief of staff Donald T. Regan, but they have not agreed on details, officials said.

Regan has been advised by several leading members of Congress and lobbyists to select a well-respected and experienced chief of congressional liaison because of the difficult battles coming up over the budget, the MX missile and aid to the rebels fighting the Sandinista government of Nicaragua.

Officials said Friedersdorf is interested in returning to the White House but wants a job somewhat removed from day-to-day lobbying and a title such as "counselor" to the president.

Friedersdorf, who left the White House after the first year of the Reagan administration to become ambassador to Bermuda, is vice president for public affairs for PepsiCo Inc. He could not be reached for comment yesterday.

He worked as a congressional lobbyist for Nixon and was later chief lobbyist for President Gerald R. Ford.

He was appointed chairman of the Federal Election Commission in 1977 by President Jimmy Carter.

Regan is expected to appoint four key deputies in the areas of politics, communications, policy and congressional relations. Officials said some of the appointments may come as early as next week while others may wait for several months.

Edward J. Rollins, the former Reagan-Bush campaign director, is expected to be brought back to handle political affairs.

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Vernon Walters: Mr. Background steps forward

WASHINGTON — Shortly after United States Army troops swept ashore in North Africa in 1942, a young American officer met a 13-year-old Moroccan boy, stood him on a tank and gave him a joyride.

And, as the storybooks say, that little boy grew up to be King Hassan II of Morocco. And that young American officer grew up to be Vernon Walters, the leading candidate to be our next ambassador to the United Nations, following the resignation of Jeane Kirkpatrick.

If Walters takes the UN job, it will mark another victory within the Reagan administration for professionalism over ideology. Where Kirkpatrick was outspoken—even demagogic and strident—Walters has made a career of being semi-visible and low-key. He has gone through postwar American history like a 68-year-old, 6-foot-3-inch Zelig, in the Woody Allen movie, popping up in the background of all the grainy old newsreels.

Who was that man at Gen. Mark Clark's side during his triumphal entry into Rome? And who was that fellow with President Truman when he confronted Gen. Douglas MacArthur on Wake Island in 1950?

And there, sitting in the back of the limousine with Vice President Nixon, when a crowd attacked his car in Caracas, Venezuela, in 1958, is that...? And who arranged Henry Kissinger's secret trips to Paris? And who was the first official to drop the hint that President Nixon was deeply involved in the Watergate cover-up? And when the Palestine Liberation Organization asked King Hassan to arrange a secret meeting with the U.S. in 1973, to whom did King Hassan turn?

The answer to all these questions, and lots of others the world hasn't even thought of asking yet, is Vernon Walters. He is the only U.S. representative to have held official

meetings—11 years ago—with the Palestine Liberation Organization. He is the only member of the Reagan administration to have spent four hours in fervent conversation with Fidel Castro—coming away with the impression that Castro wanted to break away from his dependency on the Soviet Union. He is the man who talked Argentina out of turning to Moscow for aid when it was losing the Falklands war.

In short, he is an experienced professional, the exact opposite of the naive and amateurish ideologues whom the first Reagan administration tried to put into key positions. He is best-known for speaking nine languages, and having an uncanny ability to fake four or five others, like Sid Caesar.

Walters' role in exposing Watergate is little-remembered. Six days after the June 16, 1972, burglary, Nixon and his aides figured out that they might stop an FBI investigation into funds that were channeled through Mexico by telling Walters to ask FBI Director Patrick Gray to drop

his inquiries.

Defying the White House's instructions, Walters told Gray the FBI operation would not jeopardize CIA activities in Mexico. Nixon then called Gray and asked him if Walters had called. If Nixon knew that Walters was supposed to have called, he must also have known why he called—and the only reason for the call was to organize a coverup.

Whistleblowers don't usually survive in politics, but Walters has. Alexander Haig, who described him as "a man of many languages and matchless contacts," used him as a roving ambassador. Little was said about his activities, but if you plotted Walters' travels by sticking pins into a map, you would conclude that he was trying to surround—and isolate—Castro and Libya's Muammar Khadafy by organizing neighboring countries against them.

HAIG EVEN flirted briefly with the idea of getting Khadafy's neighbors to knock him off—but Walters is a devout Catholic, to whom murder is a mortal sin. He has been accused of being too cozy with Latin American military dictators—many of whom he met as young officers in World War II. And the Argentine generals say he secretly encouraged them to launch their devastating war in the Falklands.

But he understands one basic law of the real world. "Nobody cares about policy," he once said. "Once you leave the United States, its personal relationships that count."



Lars-Erik
Nelson

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Reagan is expected to nominate former CIA deputy for U.N. post

By Owen Ullmann
Inquirer Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — President Reagan has decided to nominate Vernon A. Walters, a former deputy director of the CIA, as ambassador to the United Nations, but he is still considering whether the post should have the same cabinet rank that departing Ambassador Jeane J. Kirkpatrick holds. White House sources said yesterday.

"Walters will take it either way — with or without cabinet rank," one White House official said of Walters, 68, a retired general who now is chief diplomatic trouble-shooter for the State Department with the title of ambassador-at-large.

An aide to Walters said the ambassador was traveling out of the country and could not be reached for comment.

The White House official said Walters' boss, Secretary of State George P. Shultz, had urged the President to downgrade the U.N. post so that the new ambassador would not be able to challenge Shultz's foreign policy positions at the cabinet level, as Kirkpatrick frequently has done.

Kirkpatrick, a Democrat who has won a following among Reagan conservatives because of her strong anti-communist views, ended months of speculation about her future by announcing after a private session with Reagan on Wednesday that she would return to teaching and writing at Georgetown University.

According to U.S. officials at the United Nations, 12 of the 16 U.S. ambassadors — including every one who has served in the last 20 years — either held cabinet rank or was allowed to attend cabinet meetings without the official rank.

Walters, who has spent nearly all of his career working behind the

scenes on delicate diplomatic missions, was a trusted aide to former President Richard M. Nixon and a close associate of Alexander M. Haig Jr., who was deputy to Henry A. Kissinger during the Nixon administration. Haig, who preceded Shultz as Reagan's secretary of state, brought Walters into the State Department as his chief trouble-shooter.

Walters, fluent in more than five languages, has been a translator for high-level diplomats and for presidents, including Dwight D. Eisenhower and Nixon. In April 1972, he became the second-ranking official at the CIA, a post he held until July 1976, when he retired.

His CIA tenure came in the midst of the Watergate scandal. It was he who visited L. Patrick Gray 3d, then the FBI director, and, in effect, tried to wave the FBI off the Watergate investigation by warning that the case might expose CIA assets in Mexico.

Walters later wrote that he knew of no CIA assets being compromised but acted at the behest of White House chief of staff H. R. Haldeman because "it simply did not occur to me that the chief of staff to the president might be asking me to do something that was illegal or wrong."

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SMITH HEMPSTONE

A likely successor

Now that Max Kampelman is on his way to Geneva for the nuclear disarmament talks with the Russians, Vernon A. Walters — Dick, to his friends — is the leading candidate to succeed Jeane Kirkpatrick as American ambassador to the United Nations.

Mrs. Kirkpatrick and the New Right like Gen. Walters because he is more interested in the workings of *realpolitik* than in human rights. Secretary of State George Shultz likes him because Gen. Walters has proved both loyal and discreet in his job as ambassador-at-large (and because, since Gen. Walters lacks political ambitions, Mr. Shultz believes he can control him in a way he could not Mrs. Kirkpatrick).

President Ronald Reagan likes him because Gen. Walters can say "yes, sir" in eight languages.

Liberals do not like Gen. Walters. They regard him as a polyglot bubble-head with a background in the arms trade and an affinity for

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Gen. Vernon A. Walters

dictators, an unprincipled fixer who wormed his way from private to lieutenant general (and to deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency under Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford) by guile and flattery.

Others perhaps less than enthusiastic about the 69-year-old former intelligence operative include former U.S. Information Agency chief Frank Shakespeare, Transportation Secretary Elizabeth Hanford Dole, former Republican senator from Illinois Chuck Percy, and U.S. Ambassadors Griffith Galbraith (France), Maxwell Rabb (Italy), John Gavin (Mexico) and William Wilson (The Vatican). All of them have been reported in the running for the U.N. post.

However one feels about Dick Walters — this scribbler first met Walters 20 years ago during his second tour as military attaché at the American Embassy in Brazil — he is a most unusual man: a Roman Catholic and a lifelong bachelor, with a mind unsullied by attendance at a college or university.

Dick Walters, who was born in New York City, stands 6-foot-3, weighs 210 pounds and has the affable, somewhat rumpled air of a successful insurance executive, which is exactly what his father was. He

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